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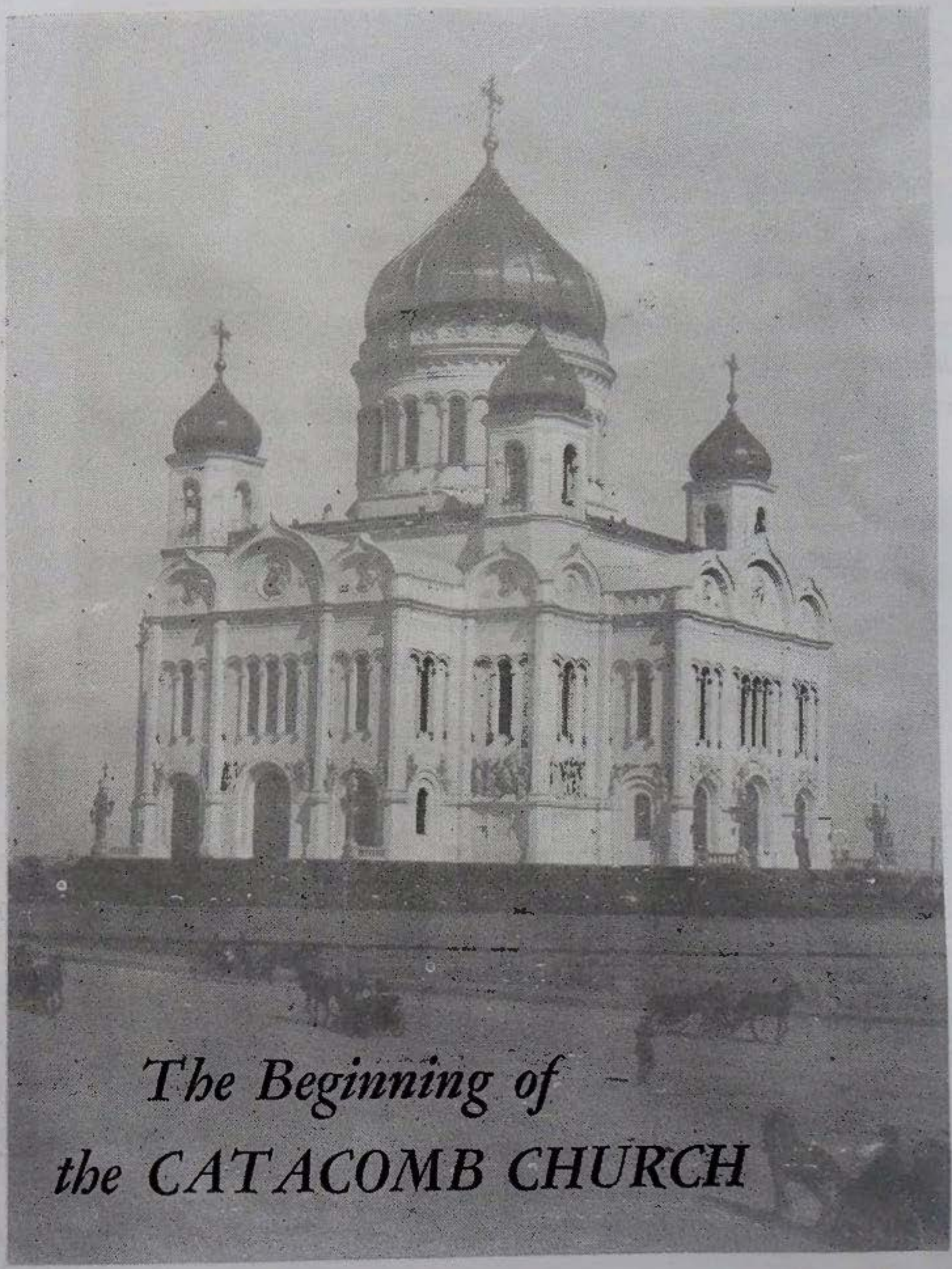

The Beginning of the CATACOMB CHURCH

THE ORTHODOX WORD

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A New Age of Martyrs and Catacombs

JUST AS from the midst of the angels the devil was to appear, but with the fall of Lucifer and his followers the remaining angels became all the more enflamed with love toward God and shone all the more brightly in heaven, — in the same way did the atheists appear in the midst of the Russian people, but their apostasy all the more revealed the holiness of Russia and glorified it both in the heavens and throughout the entire world.

An innumerable choir of new martyrs has borne witness of its faithfulness to Christ. The Russian people in its entirety, with unutterable patience bearing its sufferings, the equal of which no other single people in the world has yet experienced, has given an innumerable multitude of new confirmations of its steadfastness in faith. Despite a most cruel persecution, the Church remains unvanquished. Even if a multitude of churches has been destroyed, so that in a whole series of cities previously adorned with magnificent churches, not one of them now remains — still the faithful assemble in secret and pray to the Lord God. For Russia the times of the catacombs have been resurrected, times which she did not know earlier, for she never experienced persecution for faith before.

In the grand choir of God's saints glorified in Russia there have been many hierarchs and monks and righteous and fools for Christ. But as for martyrs, in the Russian land there have been only a few for the whole earlier time. "The most radiant army of martyrs," whose blood has been the seed of Christianity throughout the universe, an army glorified almost daily by the

(*Continued on page 39*)

+ Archbishop John Maximovitch

Archbishop John Maximovitch
Shanghai, 1938

The Life of the Great Martyr

ST. EFSTATHIOS

His wife Theopiste, and their sons Agapios and Theopistos,
who are commemorated on the 20th of September

This Life, translated from the Greek by the monks of Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Boston, is dedicated by them to the Monastery's benefactor, DR. EFSTATHIOS METROPOULOS. *May the readers remember him in their prayers.*

EFSTATHIOS (WHO BEFORE he was baptized and became a follower of Christ was named Placidas), the right victorious great martyr of Christ, was a commander in Rome during the years of the Emperor Trajan, who reigned in Rome from 98 to 117. He was illustrious and most renowned for his victories in war, and for his exceptional and courageous feats. He had no little wealth, and was descended from noble parents. In his thoughts and actions he was most manly and exceedingly sober, and besides his excellence as a soldier he had also many virtues; he was abstinent in his appetites and in the desires of the flesh; he was prudent, just, merciful, and in a word, virtuous. He had two sons who were like him in all things, in both bodily and spiritual gifts. His wife also, who was named Tatiana, was like him in all virtue.

In time of peace, he trained his soldiers by having them hunt game, so that the army might not be idle, and thus become used to unpreparedness and sloth. He himself would train with them, and strove in the art of hunting. Thus on a certain day while he was hunting in a forest, he saw a large deer from afar, which, while fleeing, would stop and turn to look at him directly in the eyes. When he saw it, the Saint charged after it on horseback in order to overtake it. Yet he was unable to come near it. Others also then ran to his aid, yet even their horses became exhausted, and when they too had despaired of reaching it, they stopped. Only the Saint, without becoming vexed on this account, continued to pursue it, until both he and the horse, drenched with sweat, reached a great chasm in the earth. As for the deer, it leapt over the chasm and stood on the opposite side, looking at him, but it was impossible for the Saint's horse to jump that chasm. Because of this, the Saint sought to find an appropriate place to cross it.

THE HOLY GREAT MARTYR EFSTATHIOS

KONTAKION, TONE 2

HAVING OPENLY imitated the Passion of Christ,* And with all zeal drunk His chalice to the full,* O communicant Efstathios,* thou didst become a co-inheritor of glory,* receiving from the heights from the Very God of all* Divine remission.

Suddenly, when he turned, he saw that between the antlers of the deer there was a Cross more radiant than the sun. He also heard a voice coming thence, which said, "Why do you pursue Me, Placidas? I am Christ Whom you do not know, and Whom you honor by your works. It is for your sake that I have appeared on this living creature. The alms and good deeds which you have done for the poor are ever before Me; therefore I came before you to capture you with the nets of My love for mankind. It is not right that a man as virtuous as you should worship deaf and senseless idols and not know the truth. For it was to save mankind that I took the form of man and came into the world."

When the Saint heard these words, he fell from his horse to the ground out of fear and trembling. After a considerable time, he came to himself and arose, looking here and there to see who had spoken to him. Since he saw no one, he cried loudly, "Whose voice do I hear? Who are you who speaks to me? Show me who you are so that I may believe in you." Then the Lord said unto him, "Learn, O Placidas, that I am Christ Who created the heaven and the earth, and divided the light from the darkness; Who made the sun to shine in the day and the moon and the stars to illumine the night; Who made the days and the nights, the months and the years; Who fashioned man out of nothing; Who, for his salvation, came after this to the earth as man and was crucified and buried and on the third day arose from the dead."

Immediately, when the Saint heard these words, he fell again with his face upon the earth and said, "I believe, Lord, that You are the Creator and Maker of the world, that You alone, and no other, are the true God." And the Saviour then said unto him, "If you believe in Me, go find the bishop of your country, so that he may baptize you as he has baptized the other Christians also." And the Saint said, "Lord, may I tell these words to my wife and to my children also, so that they also might believe in You?" "Yes," answered the Lord to him, "tell all these things in detail; and when you have been baptized and purified of your sins, come to this place again so that I may reveal to you what things are about to befall you."

When the Lord had said these things, the deer vanished, and the Saint mounted his horse and returned to his soldiers. In the evening, after he had supped with his wife and children at home, he said to her, "Today, my beloved wife, while pursuing a deer in the forest, I saw Christ crucified in the midst of its antlers, and He told me words which man cannot utter." And she said unto him, "My Lord, you saw the God in Whom the Christians believe. He is the only true God. He shall save both us and our children. I,

too, saw Him last night, and He told me these words: 'Tomorrow, you shall come to Me — you and your husband and your children — so that you may know that I am the true God.' Since He has appeared unto you also in the vision of the deer, come, let us go this night to the bishop of the Christians, so that he may baptize us; for by this baptism are the Christians saved." The Saint answered, "Christ spoke these very words to me also, that is, that we should be baptized."

When they had decided to do this, they continued speaking until midnight. Then they took their children and certain of their servants and went to the church. Leaving the servants outside, they entered and found the bishop, to whom they revealed their vision and said that they desired to be baptized. And he, giving thanks unto God Who desires the salvation of every man, baptized them all in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. And as for Placidas, he named him Efstathios, and his wife Tatiana he named Theopiste, and of their children the elder he named Agapios and the younger Theopistos. Afterwards he gave them the Immaculate Mysteries and prayed that Christ might be with them and deem them worthy of His eternal Kingdom. After this they returned to their home.

In the morning, Efstathios took certain soldiers and went again to the same place. The latter he commanded to occupy themselves with hunting, and he, with the excuse that he desired to find larger game, went to the chasm where he had seen the vision. Falling prostrate, he wept saying, "I believe in Thee, O my Christ, for now I know that Thou art the true God; Thou art the Creator of all things visible and invisible and I beseech Thee to reveal unto me those things that Thou didst promise me yesterday." Then the voice of the Lord was heard saying, "Happy are you, O Efstathios, in that you have received baptism and have conquered the might of the wicked devil. But he shall not cease from casting you into many temptations, to the end that he may force you to blaspheme and deny your faith, that you might suffer torments eternally. You shall suffer as many things as Job suffered in ancient times, but in the end you shall conquer the devil." Weeping, the Saint said, "If it be possible, my Lord, let me not have trial of these temptations but if this cannot be, strengthen me that I may keep Thy commandments and be steadfast in Thy faith." And the voice of the Lord said, "Be a man, Efstathios, and struggle for the sake of good works. My grace shall accompany you and your family, and shall keep your souls from the fiery darts of the evil one." When the Lord had said these things He ascended into the heavens. As for the Saint, he departed from there and returned to his family. Thus they both prayed to God, saying, "The will of the Lord be done."

(*Continued on page 40*)

Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd

AND THE BEGINNING OF THE CATACOMB CHURCH

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.
St. Matthew 10: 28

IN THE HISTORY of the Church of Christ there have been several critical moments when the official leadership of a Local Church has fallen away from Orthodoxy, and for a time the faithful hesitate, uncertain whom to follow, or where the Church Herself is to be found. At such times Christ our Lord, faithful to His promise that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against* His Church (St. Matt. 16: 18), raises up a champion to speak the truth and rally the faithful to the side of Orthodoxy. At the dawn of the modern age such a champion was St. Mark of Ephesus, who alone of the hierarchs of the Greek Church fearlessly condemned the impious Council and pseudo-Union of Florence and awakened the Orthodox faithful to the realization that the Church of Rome had fallen into heresy, and those who united themselves to it thereby placed themselves outside the Church of Christ.

In our own century, when a yet more formidable enemy of the Church appeared in the form of the pseudo-religious totalitarianism of atheistic Communism ; and when the acting head of the Russian Church, Metropolitan Sergius, proclaimed with his Declaration in 1927 the principle of practical and ideological cooperation with the forces of anti-Christianity — then God raised up, at the head of a veritable army of confessors, a champion in the person of Metropolitan Joseph to oppose and accuse this soul-destroying "legalization" and lead the movement of the faithful of the true Russian Orthodox Church into the catacombs.

METROPOLITAN JOSEPH
(While Bishop of Uglich)

THE LIFE OF Metropolitan Joseph (Petrovykh) before the Revolution is largely unknown to us, although its general features may be discovered in his writings, which began to appear in the Russian religious press around the turn of the century. Thus we know that he was born, approximately between 1870 and 1875, in Novgorod province in the area of Tikhvin, famous for its wonderworking Icon of the Mother of God, for which the future hierarch had great veneration. In 1899 he went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land,

The burial of Patriarch Tikhon, 1925

and perhaps it was there that the spark of his Orthodox faith was first kindled into a flame of ardent desire to serve Christ's Church. After spending the whole night of June 18 in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, he emerged at dawn and, walking through the deserted streets of Jerusalem, he was filled with the noblest feelings: "It was so good, as it is only at Pascha, when you return home after the service, burning with the desire to embrace the whole world, to renounce the earth, to fly somewhere far, far away, into the depth and breadth of the boundless heavens!..." All his life he was to remain faithful to this Christ-inspired enthusiasm of his youth. Years later, sharpened by ascetic labors and refined by suffering, it led him to become a confessor and martyr for Christ and His Holy Church.

The writings of Metropolitan Joseph on questions of spiritual life reveal a firm foundation in Orthodox patristic and ascetical literature and draw much inspiration from the texts of the Church's service books. In 1901, when he was a hieromonk, he wrote a thorough and precise article on the question: "May an Orthodox Christian, and How May He, Pray for Non-Orthodox Christians?" Beginning in 1905, now an archimandrite, he published his major work, a whole book composed of brief spiritual reflections with the

title "In the Father's Embrace: From the Diary of a Monk." The following excerpts from this work will give an idea of the author's sensitivity and precise insights into spiritual questions.

"Intense sorrows, like gold in a furnace, purify the soul, give it life, fortify and temper it. A man becomes less sensitive to his everyday sorrows and sufferings on earth, becomes calmer, more balanced, looks at the world more seriously and soberly, becomes less attached to the earthly, thirsts more for the heavenly, the eternal, the unending."

"In a man there is much energy for activity; only it needs to be awakened. It is awakened by need, sorrow, the battle for existence, love toward God, thirst for salvation, awareness of the fragility of the present life and the sweetness of the future life, and much else that is taught by the means which the Church of God possesses for the guidance and enlightenment of every man that is given to Her..."

"The more we trust in man's help and in defense by others, the farther from us are the saving and merciful grace and help of God. And this is natural: for after all, if we received help from God at a time when we expected to receive it from men, we would ascribe what is God's to men, and would turn the glory of God into human glory. Therefore the Lord arranges it even so, that His help becomes all the more evident to us, to the extent that our helplessness becomes sure and obvious and all our hope remains in Him!"

Shortly after 1908 Archimandrite Joseph was consecrated bishop of Uglich. His address on this occasion, given below in full, is consciously prophetic. Penetrated with an awareness of the rising movement of anarchy and unbelief that was already dissolving the very fabric of Orthodox Russian civilization and was about to give birth to the hideous Revolution, the young hierarch's words sound almost lke a manifesto of the very soul of Holy Russia as it faces even today the assembled armies of world-wide satanism.

YOUR HOLINESS, divinely wise Archpastors!

In this unique, exceptionally significant, and most sacred moment of my life, when the call of our Lord — "follow Me" — has touched even my extreme unworthiness — both joy and trembling, both blessedness and suffering embrace my lowly soul.

Before my mental gaze stand the choirs of holy apostles, the ranks of great hierarchs — the builders and disseminators of faith and Christ's Church on earth... From the simple to the highly-educated, from the greatly infirm to those strong and rich in powers of soul — they have offered and placed their life and all their strength on the altar of Christ's love, have given themselves as food to that sacred Fire of Christ by which the whole universe now blazes in Grace.

For me, too, to touch this grace-giving Fire; for me, too, to offer my feeble powers — or rather, infirmities — to the altar of the Universal Church; for me, too, to place my life in the furnace of the Flame of Christ, to hear the Lord's call to serve such a great work of God and receive the possibility of answering this call with the labor of the highest Apostolic expression of love and devotion to the Sweetest Heavenly Hierarch — Oh, how many grounds there are in this for joy! How sufficient this is to fill one with a feeling of unutterable heartfelt consolation and tender feeling!...

Yet — the source of such joy and consolation at the same time represents for me a source as well of an oppressive fear, of apprehensions, of heartfelt trouble and suffering. The beauty of the Apostles' feat, the beauty of the highest expression of love and devotion to the Saviour, of the highest service to the Church of God on earth — appear to my gaze not as mere WORDS, *but as true deeds, as the most living* REALITY, *outside all embellishments of thought and word. And what labors, what ascetic feats, what sufferings has this reality not given us as an example, instruction, and fortification! Behold the bloody wounds on the bodies of the absolute prisoners of Christ's love — wounds lifted up with a meek prayer for their torturers on their lips and with the shining of an unearthly joy in their faces! Behold all the horrors of persecution, torments, tortures — every kind and every endurance of death by means of which hell has attempted to unbalance the emissaries of the Crucified One, only deepening thereby its own defeat and disgrace!*

Bearing in mind all this — which is great and glorious not by human standards, and by means of which the Church of Christ, great and mighty until now, was established — unwillingly I ask myself: Can it really be that even I am capable of bearing all this? Can it really be that even I have sufficient foundation, sufficient courage, to stand in the same rank with such exemplifications of God's power and of all that is done by the power of God's love toward man and of man's love toward God?...

Yet — my fear and trembling increase all the more at the thought that, while the strength and zeal of the leaders of the Church of Christ today are far from rivalling those of the Apostles, they must do battle with considerably stronger enemies and overcome considerably more powerful obstacles and difficulties in this service. The holy Apostles, after all, had to do with a fervent — even if falsely directed — striving toward truth, whereas we, in our time, must have to do with a hardened REJECTION OF TRUTH *and even of the very idea of the Living God and His indispensability for the human heart. With all their dark sides, their insufficiencies and errors, the paganism and Judaism of antiquity were nonetheless an honest seeking of God, an*

honest desire to serve Him, a living and active exemplification of thirst for communion with Him. But the unbelief of today, every conceivable form of error and frenzy — both learned and illiterate, both anti-religious and anti-moral — and the whole public life of today: do they not express in men a complete UNWILLINGNESS TO KNOW GOD, *an unwillingness even to admit His existence, but on the contrary the desire* TO BE COMPLETELY RID *of Him, to do without Him, to live solely by the accomplishments of the proud human mind and culture?*

In such painful times, accepting in obedience the new service in Christ's Church laid upon me by God's will, in all humility I implore you, divinely wise pastors, to bring down upon me by your hierarchical prayers the strength from God worthily to conduct myself in this great service. May the all-powerful Grace of the Spirit of God descend upon the head obedient to God's call and do in me, who am unworthy, His will and power. Amen.

WITH THE COMING of the Revolution the forces of unbelief, whose power the hierarch well knew, were unleashed with full fury upon the Russian land and especially against the Orthodox Church, the very existence of which was a threat to the program of Bolshevism and a reproach to what conscience still remained in the frenzied atheists. As long as Patriarch Tikhon was alive, the Church had a visible center of unity. Even when the Patriarch was imprisoned, when the apostates of the "Living Church" had taken possession of the vast majority of the Orthodox churches in Russia, and the "progressive" Church of Constantinople had given international prestige to this synagogue of satan by recognizing it as the Orthodox Church of Russia — still the faithful, by remaining with their Patriarch, remained Orthodox, and their loyalty to the Patriarch became the very test of their Orthodoxy; and it was this more than anything else that broke the power of the "Living Church."

But with the death of Patriarch Tikhon in 1925, the situation became much less clear. Under the conditions of persecution it was impossible for a Church Council to be called to elect a new patriarch; and, foreseeing this, Patriarch Tikhon had designated three leading hierarchs, one of whom (whoever was not in prison or banishment) should become *Locum Tenens* of the Patriarchal Throne on his death and safeguard the external unity of the Church. Of these three hierarchs, only one — Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsk — was free at the time of the Patriarch's death, and he was accepted, in a special decree signed by over fifty bishops, by the Russian Church as her acting head. Metropolitan Peter himself designated three "Substitutes" for the position of *Locum Tenens* in case he should be arrested or killed in turn, one of

whom was Metropolitan Joseph (at that time Archbishop of Rostov), and another, Metropolitan (later "Patriarch") Sergius. Metropolitan Peter was arrested within a few months for refusing to sign a "declaration" which would give away the Church's inner freedom to the atheist regime. From 1925 to 1927 no candidate was able to take his place for more than a few months before being imprisoned, and it became clear that the Soviet Government would not rest until it had found or forced a hierarch to sign a document pleasing to the regime. This hierarch was found in the person of Metropolitan Sergius, who on July 16|29, 1927, after being released from several months in prison, issued the infamous "Declaration" that made him and his followers in effect the agents of the Soviet State. In publishing the "Declaration" on August 19, the official Soviet newspaper *Izvestia* noted that "the far-sighted part of the clergy had already entered upon this path in 1922" — referring to the "Living Church." Thus did the atheist regime succeed in introducing "Renovationism" into the Patriarchal Church itself, and the result was the decisive protest of the leading hierarchs of the Russian Church, who, when they saw that Metropolitan Sergius was clearly determined to force his will upon the whole Church, soon began to break off communion with him.

It thus became immediately clear that the "Declaration" was in flagrant defiance of the 34th Apostolic Canon, having been proclaimed "without the consent of all" bishops, being indeed the work of Sergius alone at the dictation of the atheist regime; and therefore the only ecclesiastical course open for Sergius was to retract the "Declaration" in the face of such overwhelming disapproval of his fellow hierarchs. Instead of this, however, as if to prove that he longer considered or needed the opinion of the Church, but had become the obedient tool of the regime, he began, together with his uncanonical "Synod" — the formation of which far exceeded his powers as Substitute of the *Locum Tenens* — an unparalleled transference of bishops from see to see and placed under interdict all who did not agree with him, founding thus a submissive "Soviet" Church.

Metropolitan Joseph, as one of the first to protest the "Declaration," was quickly "transferred" from Petrograd, to which See he had arrived only in September of 1926. By an act of the "Synod" of October 19, 1927, "Metropolitan Joseph is considered transferred to the See of Odessa, and it is suggested that he not be tempted by the easy possibility of living in Rostov, which will cause disturbance among the faithful both of Leningrad and of Rostov..." In reply, Metropolitan Joseph cited those canons that forbid the needless transference of bishops from city to city and stated, quoting the canons: "Even if I allowed to be done with me such a thing contrary to a Council of the Holy Fathers, then still may this order 'be completely invalid'

and may he who has been removed 'be returned' to his own Church." Giving his case over "to the Judgement of God," he refused to move.

At this time, in the autumn of 1927, Metropolitan Joseph still regarded his case as a private one, and, as he states in one of the "Documents" that follow, he was prepared to retire in disgrace and under interdict in order not to have any communion with Sergius, but he still had no intention of becoming involved in any kind of "schism."

Soon, however, it became clear that his case was only a small part of an issue that had convulsed the whole of Orthodox Russia. The leading bishops who were still in freedom and were able to judge the issue came to the conclusion that Sergius himself had gone into schism by his "Declaration" and his arbitrary acts directed against the Church, and they hastened to declare their separation from him, in late 1927 and early 1928. Metropolitan Joseph all this time was not allowed by the authorities to reside at his see of Petrograd (Leningrad), but already in December of 1927 he blessed his Vicar Bishops to depart from Sergius; and, being himself in Rostov, he signed, together with Metropolitan Agathangel and other hierarchs of the Yaroslavl region, an epistle to Metropolitan Sergius of February 6, 1928, which declared their separation from him until he should show repentance for his errors, recognizing in the meantime no head of the Church apart from the banished Metropolitan Peter.

Petrograd at this time had become the very heart of the Church's protest against Sergius, and there was scarcely an Orthodox soul in the former capital that was not anguished over the question of whom to follow. Many refused for a time to receive Communion in any church, uncertain as to whose sacraments were valid or where the Church of Christ was to be found. After signing the epistle of the Yaroslavl Archpastors, Metropolitan Joseph stepped boldly forward into battle for the Church and gave his blessing for the clergy and faithful of Petrograd to follow his example in separating from Sergius, offering his own spiritual guidance and care to this movement, and entrusting the governance of the Petrograd Diocese to his outspokenly anti-Sergianist Vicar, Bishop Dimitry of Gdov. Blessing the "good decision of the zealots of Christ's truth," he prayed "that the Lord preserve us all in unanimity and holy firmness of spirit in the new trial which the Church is undergoing."

But against the spiritual weapons of Christ's warriors, the evil one gathered all the forces of the world's first satanist regime. The interdictions of Metropolitan Sergius were the sign for the Soviet Political Police to arrest and banish the protesting bishops; even many who attended Sergius' own

"legal" churches were not spared by the authorities, and the chief result of the policy of "Sergianism" — to quote the words, born of bitter experience, used forty years later inside the USSR by Boris Talantov — was that "Metropolitan Sergius' actions saved nothing except his own skin." A dark night of expiatory suffering settled upon the Russian land and faithful. "Sergianism" itself was rejected by the faithful, inasmuch as — in the words, again, of Talantov — "by the beginning of the Second World War... the greater part of those churches that remained did not recognize Metropolitan Sergius." Out of the more than 100 bishops known to be still alive in 1943, Sergius could find only 18 (and some of these were newly consecrated) to elect him "Patriarch" in that year.

Metropolitan Joseph, by his decisive words and acts and by his position as one of the Substitutes of the *Locum Tenens* of the Patriarchal Throne, became the factual head of the separatist movement, acting in the name of the banished *Locum Tenens,* Metropolitan Peter, whose anti-Sergianist attitude was not to become known for some time. So powerful was the influence and example of Metropolitan Joseph that all who followed him came to be called "Josephites," and to this day all who defend the Sergianist Moscow Patriarchate refer to this movement of the zealots of Orthodoxy as the "Josephite schism."

There were "Sergianists" at that time, as there are today, who, even while admitting that it was the best element among the clergy and faithful who went over to the side of the "Josephites," nonetheless accuse and condemn them for their "pride" in believing that they represented the true Orthodox Church of Russia. The statements of Metropolitan Joseph, it is true, are extremely outspoken, absolutely uncompromising in principle, and unsparing of persons. But those who find "pride" in such words are perhaps simply unaware of the critical urgency of the issues involved. When the Church is being betrayed and the faithful led astray, it is no time for compliments and polite "dialogues," nor for placing "sympathy" above truth. For courageous souls the knowledge that every word may bring prison and death only increases their boldness in speaking the truth without embellishments. And thus it has always been in the Church of Christ; Her outspoken defenders are hymned as champions in the Church's song of praise. Significantly, the righteous polemic of Metropolitan Joseph and his followers has emerged again in the contemporary Soviet Union in the writings of Boris Talantov (see page 31 of this issue) and other outspoken critics of the Sergianist hierarchy. By comparison, the criticisms of Sergianism in the Russian diaspora are quite mild and charitable.

METROPOLITAN JOSEPH himself was very soon arrested and sent in banishment to Central Asia. Even in banishment and prison the authorities persecuted religion and prohibited services, and so it was that throughout the Russian land, this one vast concentration camp, in the period after 1927 the "Josephites" became transformed into the Catacomb Church. The full measure of the heroic deeds and sufferings of this Church will become known only in God's time. But even before that ardently-desired time, it is possible to glimpse some small fragments of its history. The following first-hand account was written by Natalia V. Urusova, who was able to escape from the Soviet Union during the Second World War, and died in 1968 in New York.

"In August of 1936 there was living in Alma Ata (Central Asia) the comparatively young Archimandrite Arsenius. From him I found out for the first time that there exists a secret, catacomb Church, headed by Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd and organized by him with the blessing of Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsk, with whom he, while being in banishment in Chemkent, 100 miles from Alma Ata, had secret contact all the time. Archimandrite Arsenius was ordained by the Metropolitan and had the good fortune to support him materially, earning his living by the manufacture of various kinds of mannikins and small articles for museums. He had a church deep down underground and he and Metropolitan Joseph served in it. The Metropolitan had also consecrated it, secretly, on one of his rare trips to Alma Ata. Fr. Arsenius had dug out this church by great and long labors.

"We had great respect for Archimandrite Arsenius, all the more because he was loved by Metropolitan Joseph and through him we could have contact with the latter. The Metropolitan at that time was living in Chemkent. Before that, from the very beginning of his banishment, he had lived in the small town of Aulieta, where he had not been allowed to live in a room, but had been placed in a shed with farm animals, his bed separated from them by a fence of stakes.

"The church dug out of the earth was in the apartment of Archimandrite Arsenius. The entrance was a trap-door, covered by a carpet. The top was taken off, and under it was a ladder to the cellar. In one corner of the cellar there was an opening in the earth, which was covered with rocks. The rocks were moved aside and, bending down completely, one had to crawl three steps forward, and there was the entrance to the tiny church. There were many icons, and lamps were burning. Metropolitan Joseph was very tall, and nonetheless twice in my presence he travelled here secretly and penetrated to this church.

"A remarkable state of mind and soul was created by this church, but I do not hide the fact that the fear of being discovered during the services, especially at night, was difficult to conquer. When the big chained dog began to bark in the yard — even though it was muffled, still it was audible underground — then everyone expected the cry and the knock of the GPU. For the whole of 1936 and until September in 1937 everything was all right. My son sang here together with one nun. On August 26 Metropolitan Joseph came and honored us with a visit on my namesday.

"What a marvellous, humble, unshakable man of prayer! This was reflected in his face and eyes as in a mirror. Very tall, with a large white beard and an extraordinarily kind face, he could not help but attract one to him, and one only wished never to part from him. His monastic garb was covered up, as was his hair; otherwise he would have been arrested immediately right on the street, since he was watched and did not have the right to travel. He himself said that Patriarch Tikhon had offered, right after his election, to designate him as his first Substitute. For some reason this has not been noted anywhere yet in the history of the institution of *Locum Tenens.* He recognized Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsk as the lawful head of the Church, and right up to the latter's arrest in September, 1937, he had secret contacts with him, even while rumors were circulating everywhere that Metropolitan Peter was dead.

"Metropolitan Joseph stayed at tea with us for over an hour. Concerning his banishment of almost ten years, he related that it had been extremely difficult. He had lived in a sty with pigs in a platted shed, slept on boards separated from the pigs by a few stakes. In these conditions he had borne cold and heat, every kind of weather and the stifling air. Once a snake, clinging to a stake on his roof, crawled down right over his head. These conditions were also apparently the cause of his illness. At times he suffered terribly from an intestinal ulcer, or perhaps he had some kind of internal tumor, perhaps cancerous, and he was on a diet which Archimandrite Arsenius helped him to keep. He suffered everything like the righteous, and if he related his difficult persecutions, it was only because we all were recalling the cruelties of the GPU.

"Fr. Arsenius told here of one form of torture and mockery. 'When they were taking us through Siberia, there was a severe frost. In the train there was a bath-car. They chased us, completely naked, through the cars to the bath. With joy we drenched ourselves with the hot water and got a little warm, since the cars themselves were almost unheated. Without giving us anything to dry ourselves with, with wet heads, they chased us back. On the metal platform between cars they deliberately stopped us, and our wet feet

immediately froze to the metal. At the command to advance, we tore away with blood the frozen bottoms of our feet...'

"On the next day, after staying overnight with Fr. Arsenius, the Metropolitan returned to his own place. Now he was living in different circumstances. After many years it was permitted to find an apartment for him in Chemkent. Archimandrite Arsenius arranged an apartment for him to live quietly in, saw to his food, not only as to its sufficiency but also to keep his diet. First a zither, and then a harmonium was obtained for him, which were a joy for the Metropolitan, who was a good musician. He put psalms to music and sang them.

"On September 23, 1937, everywhere in the neighborhood of Alma Ata, throughout Kazakhstan, all the clergy of the underground Josephite churches were arrested, after having served their terms of banishment for refusing to recognize the Soviet churches. All of them were sentenced to ten years more without right of correspondence and, as I discovered later, Metropolitan Joseph also was among them. Archimandrite Arsenius was also arrested. After the arrest of my son, being beside myself, I was running to Fr. Arsenius right at dawn, and coming up to his house I saw an automobile and the GPU going in to him. Fortunately they did not see me. The underground church of Fr. Arsenius was discovered. Through lack of caution he once revealed its secret to an elderly man, respectable in appearance, who turned out to be an agent of the GPU.

"On returning to Moscow after my three-year voluntary banishment together with my son, I very soon found out about the existence here also of secret Josephite churches — that is to say, not churches, but services in secret rooms, where sometimes twenty to twenty-five people would gather. The service would be conducted in a whisper, with strict control by the faithful in view of the possibility of betrayal. People came usually at dawn according to an agreed signal. For the most part they would carefully tap at the drainpipe by a window, where someone would be standing and listening.

"Until the arrival of the Germans in Mozhaisk in 1941, I lived peacefully in this city and went to catacomb services in Moscow."

AT THE END OF 1938 Metropolitan Joseph was executed by firing squad for the "crime" of giving encouragement to wandering priests. Years before he had spiritually prepared himself, as it were, for this, his own martyrdom. He wrote in his "Diary of a Monk," in an entry published in September, 1905:

"*Love your enemies* (St. Luke 6: 35). To say this is easy, but — how difficult to do it. This is much higher than simply love of neighbor. It is the supreme triumph of love, its true essence and most superb expression... In

order that one's heart might be inflamed with love toward one's enemy, there must be a special, grace-given state of soul, a special heavenly attunement of the heart — there must be that inexpressible and indescribable quality that abundantly filled the soul of the First Martyr Stephen when he, being stoned, his face shining like an angel, prayed for his murderers: *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge* (Acts 7: 60). Oh, in this great moment for him what a small place did everything earthly around him find in him! What were the executioners to him? Before him were the opened heavens, the Son of God at the right hand of the Father; heavenly glory poured into his soul and seized it entirely with an incomprehensible ecstasy, and the executioners with all their pitiful malice not only could not prevent this, but even assisted it; at this moment they were even, as it were, his benefactors, hastening his departure from the body and the utter immersion of his soul in these oceans of heavenly ecstasy and blessedness... In this blissful moment, could the tortured sufferer cry out in any other way than with the voice of the supreme triumph of love for one's enemies?!"

The example of this fearless confessor and champion of Christ's Church has not been in vain. After Patriarch Tikhon himself, the name of Metropolitan Joseph stands out as a symbol of the integrity and genuineness of the Orthodoxy of the Russian Church. Even after half a century of persecution, terror, and betrayal, the true Orthodox Church of Russia, though hidden, has not been vanquished. To the present day one can accurately call this Catacomb Church either the Church of "Tikhonites" or the Church of "Josephites"; but most accurately of all, it is known, even to the Soviet authorities themselves, as the "True Orthodox Church." In the following Soviet account, taken from the *Atheist's Dictionary* (Moscow, 2nd Edition, 1966) —a practical handbook for anti-religious agitators — one may see, behind the exaggerations and fabrications of the Soviet mind, the true and confessing Orthodox Church of Russia today. One may note in this account that the Soviets themselves are well aware of the historical continuities involved; for they date the origin of the "True Orthodox Church" to the years 1922-26, i.e., to Patriarch Tikhon and his followers; whereas the "Sergianists," as *Izvestia* saw clearly in 1927, have their origins in the "Living Church" of that same period.

TRUE ORTHODOX CHURCH *(TOC): An Orthodox-monarchist sect, originating in the years* 1922-26, *which was organized in* 1927, *when Metr. Sergius proclaimed the principles of a loyal relation to Soviet authority. Monarchist elements, united around the Metropolitan of Leningrad Joseph (Petrovykh), or* JOSEPHITES, *in 1928 established a directing center of the TOC, and united all groups and elements which had come out against the Soviet*

order. In the country the TOC had support among the kulaks and together with other anti-Soviet elements came out against collectivization and organized terroristic acts against Party and Soviet activities, uprisings, etc. It directed into the villages a multitude of monks and nuns, who roamed about the countryside spreading anti Soviet rumors. The TOC was a widely ramified monarchist-rebellious organization. In its composition were 613 priests and monks, 416 kulaks, 70 former tsarist officials and officers. The more fanatical members, crazy women, passing themselves off for prophets, saints, healers, members of the imperial family, spread monarchist ideas, conducted propaganda against the leadership of the Orthodox Church, called on people not to submit to Soviet laws.

Basic characteristics of the sect: (1) rejection of the Orthodox Church headed by the patriarch as having 'sold itself to Antichrist,' to the world; (2) recognition as canonical of only those clergy who have been ordained by followers of Tikhon; (3) acceptance of Orthodox rites; (4) propaganda of the approaching 'end of the world'; (5) cult of members of the imperial family of Romanov: their portraits are preserved as holy objects, and believers in secret make prostrations in front of them; (6) assumption of the names of tsars and their relatives by the leaders of the sect; (7) preservation and spread of counter-revolutionary monarchist literature; (8) establishment of catacomb churches and monasteries in houses. The institution of priesthood is preserved, but in many places certain rites are performed by ordinary believers. On great religious holidays the members of this sect gather at so-called sources (lakes, springs, and the like), where propaganda is conducted by various kinds of clairvoyants, foretellers, crazy men, holy fools, who enjoy special honor in the sect. Striving to fence off the members of the sect from the influence of Soviet reality, the leaders of the sect in order to frighten believers make use of the myth of Antichrist, who has supposedly been reigning in the world since 1917. *So as not to fall into his nets, Christians are to lead a closed-up, hermitic form of life, spend all their free time in prayer, not take part in public life.*

The Soviet press in recent years has given ample evidence of the existence of this True Orthodox Church. Its existence is illegal, and its members are treated as criminals by the regime. Of necessity its governing principle must be Metropolitan Joseph's instruction to his followers in 1927: "Govern yourselves independently"; and its members are chiefly, as he foresaw (see p. 29), "not only not bishops and not archpriests, but the simplest mortals."

The existence of this Catacomb Church today is surely a sign to world Orthodoxy: the age of Orthodoxy's grandeur is past; the last age of catacombs is in our midst. In Russia this truth is more than evident; among its many proofs, perhaps the most striking is the history of the Church of Christ the

Saviour in Moscow (*see cover*). Once a magnificent temple, a monument to God's preservation of the Russian land in 1812 and a visible symbol of the faith of a whole people, it was entirely destroyed by the Soviets, and to this day nothing has been built on its site, and it remains a gaping hole in the center of the capital of world atheism. A surprising testimony of its meaning for the Russian people even today may be found in a short novel, *Iskupleniye* ("Redemption"), by the Soviet writer Yuly Daniel; while not a believer himself, his observations touch something very deep within Soviet life. "I met Mishka Lurye at the Metro station 'Hall of the Soviets' near the board fence surrounding the excavation. Interesting: will they build something here, or will this hole remain this way as a monument to the blown-up Church of Christ the Saviour? How many years the boards have been here, posters stuck up on them. 'Mishka, when did they blow up the church?' 'What church?... Oh, they blew it up in '34....' 29 years ago they blew up the church. Despite the proverb, the holy place is empty. Of course, I don't argue, there's no benefit in churches, not a bit; they're architectural monuments, no more; but all the same... They blew up God, and the shock-wave from the explosion wounded man, gave him a contusion. Deafness, dumbness... The pus flows from under the bandage, from under the articles on humanism..." (Author now in prison.)

Even so, he who looks for the Church in the Soviet Union today finds — a hole in the earth, a deep wound in the Orthodox Russian people that is not at all hidden by the false front of the Moscow Patriarchate. But is the situation so very different in the free world? Here voluntary apostasy, renovationism and heresy have achieved much the same result as the coercion of the atheist regime in the USSR. Behind the glittering facade of almost all the free Orthodox Churches, with their "ecumenical" triumphs — is a gaping hole in the earth, all the abyss of difference that exists between the "official" apostates and the "simple mortals": the saving remnant of Orthodox faithful of many nations. Even now these faithful are being driven into the voluntary catacombs of separation from the ecumenist heresiarchs, gathering around the few truly Orthodox bishops who remain. Thus the Divine Head of the Church prepares them for the greater trials that seem to lie ahead. The prophecy of the holy and clairvoyant Elder Ignaty of Harbin, made some 30 years ago, no longer seems remote: *"What began in Russia, will end in America."*

But if such terrible days be truly upon us, even Orthodox America — so weak, so inexperienced, so naive — has all that is necessary to face these days in the example of Metropolitan Joseph and the True Orthodox Christians of the first land to experience the fearful yoke of satanic atheism.

Holy New Hieromartyr Joseph and all the new martyrs of the Communist Yoke, pray to God for us!

The Counsels of the Elder Nazarius

II

ON CHRISTIAN ASCETICISM (PODVIG)

AND SO, EVERYONE should love God with faith and hope and strive to fulfill His works, traditions, and commands. But what are His works, traditions, and commands? Behold, beloved, they are these: This age is not rest and repose, but a battle, warfare, a marketplace, trading, a school, a sea voyage. For these reasons you must labor in asceticism, not become despondent, not be idle, but exercise yourself in the works of God.

Know, that for every battle there is a victory; gather your strength, fight, gain the victory; for often the opposing forces go about and like lions roar and seek whom they may devour. Take care, lest you be vanquished.

Look carefully: here they sell crowns; acquire them, lest you return empty without a purchase. Strive not to deprive yourself of God's grace. Otherwise you will be a stranger to reward, and, more than that, you will be evilly judged and will perish.

Examine what the Prophet Jeremiah writes: *Thus saith the Lord* God: *Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death* (Jer. 21: 8). Like unto this also speaks Sirach: *Before a man are life and death* (Sirach 15: 17). And Isaiah speaks to one who wishes to fulfill the law: *If ye be willing and obedient to Me, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it* (Is. 1: 19, 20).

John writes: *He that is of God heareth God's words* (St. John 8: 47), and he who is not of God does not hear them. And the Lord, consoling those who are afflicted, says: *Ye shall weep and lament;... ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy* for you (16: 20).

And again the Lord says: *Verily, I say unto you, if a man keep My saying, he shall never see death* (St. John 8: 51). And again He says: *He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life*

(8: 12). And in another place: *If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be* (12: 26). And *If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them* (13: 17).

But what must we know that we may be blessed? Christ teaches us this, and His teaching is nothing else than His life, concerning which He instructs us in Matthew, saying: *Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it* (St. Matt. 7: 13, 14). And again it is written: *Take My yoke upon you.... for My yoke is easy, and My burden is light* (11: 29, 30). And again He instructs: *Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life* (19: 29). And in another place He says: *If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple* (St. Luke 14: 26, 27).

And in the catholic epistle of John we are advised: *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world (is) the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life... And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof* (I John 2: 15-17). And again the same Apostle says: *The whole world lieth in evil* (5: 19).

James writes: *Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God* (St. James 4: 4).

Paul teaches: *See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is* (Eph. 5: 15-17).

And like unto this speaks Sirach: *Understand, that thou* goest *in the midst of nets,* lest thou be caught (Sirach 9: 18). And Job proclaims: *Is not the life of man upon earth a warfare?* For *his days are like the days of a hireling* (Job 7: 1).

Examine carefully: is there not a battle and warfare every day? Flesh rises up against spirit, and spirit against flesh. Hear Paul, who speaks of this: *I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O*

wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (Rom. 7: 23, 24). And in another place he says: *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against the spirits of wickedness in high places* (Eph. 6: 12). Therefore in another place, writing to Timothy, in order to strengthen him in the trials coming upon him, he counsels him to endure in this way: *Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ* (II Tim. 2: 3).

But it is not enough only to suffer. To suffer and do good: this is pleasing to God and profitable to ourselves. *For what profit is it,* writes the Apostle Peter, *if, when ye be buffetted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called* (I Peter 2: 20, 21).

How can we monks, above all, not accept such soul-saving counsels? How can we not be moved by such good instruction?

Beloved, let us accept with love these words of the Apostle, in which he teaches, confirms, and instructs us, saying: Be sober, keep vigil; *stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation* of obedience; *above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.* That is, *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in* vigilant *spirit,* it behooves us to oppose the snares of the devil (Eph. 6: 14-18).

Enough has been said concerning the fact that Christ our Saviour, the Prophets, Apostles, and all Saints, with great compassion and love call upon us and exhort us as much as possible to remove and separate ourselves from the beguilements of the world.

Christ praises Mary in what is good, saying: *Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her* (St. Luke 10: 42). Thus we too should choose the good and preserve ourselves from the world, for it lies in evil.

The Epistles of Joseph, Metropolitan of Petrograd

The following are the principal epistles that have come down to us from the first head of the Catacomb Church, demonstrating his fearless stand against Sergianism at its very outbreak. Brief excerpts from two other of his epistles of this period may be found on pages 14 and 15.

THE SERGIANIST SCHISM OF 1927

3. RESOLUTION ON THE REPORT OF THE PETROGRAD VICARS

Document of December 23, 1927

IN ORDER TO CONDEMN and counteract the latest actions of Metropolitan Sergius, which are contrary to the spirit and the good of the Holy Church of Christ, under present conditions we have no other means apart from a decisive departure from him and an ignoring of his orders. Let these orders be accepted henceforth only by the paper they are written on, which tolerates anything, and by the unfeeling air which contains everything — but not by the living souls of the faithful children of Christ's Church.

In separating from Metropolitan Sergius and his acts, we do not separate from our lawful Chief Hierarch, Metropolitan Peter, nor from the Council, which will meet at some time in the future, of those Orthodox hierarchs who have remained faithful. May this Council, our sole competent judge, not then hold us guilty for our boldness. May it judge us, not as despisers of the sacred canons of the Fathers, but only as fearful to violate them. Even if we have erred, we have erred honestly, out of zeal for the purity of Orthodoxy in the present evil age. And if we turn out to be guilty, then may we be even especially deserving of condescension, and not of deposition.

And so, even if all pastors should leave us, may the Heavenly Pastor not leave us, according to His unfailing promise to remain in His Church to the end of the age.

4. APPEAL TO THE FAITHFUL OF PETROGRAD

Document of early 1928, written from Rostov

THE ARCHPASTORS of the ecclesiastical province of Yaroslavl — Agathangel Metropolitan of Yaroslavl, Seraphim Archbishop of Uglich, former Substitute of the Patriarchal *Locum Tenens*, Archbishop Varlaam, formerly of Pskov, now ruling the Dashedovsky Vicariate of the Diocese of Yaroslavl, and Eugene Bishop of Rostov — by a special document have declared their separation from Metropolitan Sergius and their independent governance from now on of the flocks entrusted to them by God. This document, signed on January 27 (February 9), has to such an extent been called forth by the conditions of the times and the attitude of the faithful masses of people, and this separation is so well founded, that I, residing in the Yaroslavl region, have taken part in it and added my own signature to it.

Thus, henceforth all the orders of Metropolitan Sergius have no force for us. This gives me grounds to protest anew my unlawful removal from the flock of Leningrad and to ask for a canonically correct decision on this question at an appropriate trial by Orthodox bishops. And until such a decision I consider myself to have no right to leave the flock entrusted to me (in the sense of the 16th Canon of the First and Second Council) to the arbitrary whim of Church administrators who do not have our confidence; and before the Lord God and my conscience I accept the obligation to take measures to pacify my disturbed and agitated flock. To this end I call first of all upon my vicar bishops to serve the flock of Leningrad in concord with me. To the Right Reverend Bishop of Gdov, Dimitry, I give over the temporary governance of the Diocese of Leningrad. The Right Reverend Gregory I likewise request to continue serving in the St. Alexander Nevsky Lavra as my substitute, in concord with me.

Invoking God's blessing upon the shepherds and all the faithful, I request and beg you to trust our leadership and our archpastoral concern, peacefully and quietly continuing the work of prayer, salvation of the soul, and Divine service, humbly submitting to the civil authority, which for the time being has not found it possible to permit my unworthiness to come into immediate communion in prayer with the flock entrusted to me. Being far away, I shall nonetheless be in constant prayerful remembrance of and concern for you, requesting that my name be pronounced at Divine services in the customary way. May the Lord hear our common lamentation, and may He bless with peace and quiet our much-suffering Church.

5. EPISTLE TO AN ARCHIMANDRITE OF PETROGRAD (1928)

DEAR FATHER: Until lately I thought that my dispute wiith Metropolitan Sergius was finished and that, refusing to offer myself as a sacrifice to the crude politics, intrigues, and pursuits of the enemies and betrayers of the Church, I could peacefully go off to the side, voluntarily offering myself as a sacrifice of protest and warfare against this foul politics and arbitrariness. And I was entirely sincere when I thought and said that "I am not starting any kind of schism," and I will submit to the unlawful punishment against me — all the way to interdict and excommunication— hoping in God's justice alone.

But it turned out that ecclesiastical life does not stand at freezing point, but bubbles and foams above the normal boiling point. My "small case" soon turned out to be only a small part of such a monstrous arbitrariness, flattery of men, and betrayal of the Church to the interests of atheism and the destruction of this Church, that it remained for me henceforth to wonder not only at my own calmness and patience, but now as well at the indifference and blindness of those others who still suppose that those who have allowed and done this hideous thing are doing the work of God, are "saving" the Church, are governing and not crudely injuring Her, mocking Her, numbering themselves among Her enemies, cutting themselves off from Her — for it is not they who are cutting off those who cannot bear any longer this bacchanalia, this crude coercion and hideously blasphemous politics.

Perhaps I could have borne even this. I could have assumed that it was none of my business, just as my affair now is none of yours. But, dear Father, I suddenly with particular pain began to feel myself to a significant degree responsible for the Church's misfortune. After all, as you know, I am one of the Substitutes of the Patriarchal *Locum Tenens,* who is obliged by an obligation of suffering not only to take the place of my arrested predecessor, but also to be for him, even when he is free, a precaution, ready to take his place in case he should spiritually fall. To be sure, such a spiritual fall should be, in the normal conditions of ecclesiastical life, accompanied by a trial and a conciliar decision. But what kind of trial and conciliar decision are possible now, under present conditions? And by what kind of trial and conciliar decision was there administered to me a punishment which is permissible according to the canons only for a great sin on my part? Why is it that, demanding a trial and conciliar decision in one instance you allow their absence in another?

Such an argument can be no more than material for a section on incongruities in a textbook on logic. Just wait; the time will come, we hope, when we shall speak of our events also at a trial. And there is still a great question as to who will then be the more accused. But for the time being the

matter stands thus: We will not give the Church as a sacrifice over to the mercy of the betrayers and foul politicians and agents of atheism and destruction. And by this protest we do not cut ourselves off from Her, but we cut them off from us and boldly say: not only have we not gone away, do not go away, and will never go away from the bosom of the true Orthodox Church, but those who are not with us and for us, but against us, we consider Her enemies, betrayers, and murderers. It is not we who go into schism by not submitting to Metropolitan Sergius, but rather you who are obedient to him go with him into the abyss of the Church's condemnation. We call upon you and fortify your powers for battle for the independence of the Church, only not at all in the way you suppose is required: not by agreement with the enslavers of this Church and the murderers of Her holy independence, which is manifested now in Her holy rightlessness, but rather by a loud and decisive protest against every acquiescence, against hypocritical and lying compromises and against the betrayal of Her interests to the interests of godless satanism and a bitter warfare against Christ and His Church.

Do you really not see the contradiction and incongruity, which are not compatible with anything, in your dilemma? (You say:) "Will you take away our obedience to you by going into schism, or, by submitting to Metropolitan Sergius, fortify our powers for the battle for the independence of the Holy Church?" *I* am going into schism?! Submission to Sergius is *a battle for the independence of the Church?!* My dear! Any old lady in Leningrad will laugh that out of town!

Perhaps, I do not dispute, "there are more of you, presently, than of us." And let it be that "the great mass is not for me," as you say. But I will never consider myself a schismatic, even if I were to remain absolutely alone, as one of the holy confessors once was. The matter is not at all one of quantity, do not forget that for a minute: the Son of God, *when He cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?* (St. Luke 18: 8.) And perhaps the last "rebels" against the betrayers of the Church and the accomplices of Her ruin will be, not only not bishops and not archpriests, but the simplest mortals, just as at the Cross of Christ His last gasp of suffering was heard by a few simple souls who were close to Him.

And so, dear Father, do not judge me severely, especially by means of your Balsamon. I reckon that he is quite far from being the same thing that the very authors of the holy canons wrote in a sense understandable to everyone even without commentaries, and that in any case this Balsamon cannot be an authoritative and faithful commentary of our circumstances, which were not foreseen by any commentaries and canons at all.

Do not judge me so severely, and clearly understand the following:

1. I am not at all a schismatic, and I call not to a schism, but to the purification of the Church from those who sow real schism and provoke it.

2. To indicate to another his errors and wrongs is not schism but, to speak simply, it is putting an unbridled horse back into harness.

3. The refusal to accept sound reproaches and directives is in reality a schism and a trampling on the truth.

4. In the construction of ecclesiastical life the participants are not only those at the head, but the whole body of the Church, and a schismatic is he who assumes to himself rights which exceed his authority and in the name of the Church presumes to say that which is not shared by his colleagues.

5. Metropolitan Sergius has shown himself to be such a schismatic, for he has far exceeded his authority and has rejected and scorned the voice of many hierarchs, in whose midst the pure truth has been preserved.

You remark incidentally that among the number of ways to truth, "Christ indicated to us yet another new path: that ye love one another"; About this I only remind you, Father, of the marvellous conclusion of Metropolitan Philaret in his sermon on love for one's enemies: "And so, despise the enemies of God, strike the enemies of the fatherland, love your enemies! Amen." (Vol. I, p. 285. See also the Apostle of love, II John 1: 10, 11.)

The defenders of Sergius say that the canons allow one to separate oneself from a bishop only for heresy which has been condemned by a council. Against this one may reply that the deeds of Metropolitan Sergius may be sufficiently placed in this category as well, if one has in view such an open violation by him of the freedom and dignity of the Church, One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.

But beyond this, the canons themselves could not foresee many things. And can one dispute that it is even worse and more harmful than any heresy when one plunges a knife into the Church's very heart — Her freedom and dignity? Which is more harmful—a heretic or a murderer (of the Church)?

...Lest imperceptibly and little by little we lose the freedom which our Lord Jesus Christ, the Liberator of all men, has given us as a free gift by His Own blood (8th Canon of the Third Ecumenical Council).

SOURCES. *"Documents" and Urusova* (*p.* 17), *from Protopresbyter M. Polsky,* RUSSIA'S NEW MARTYRS, *vol.* 2. *Jordanville, N.Y.,* 1957. *pp.* 1-10; *writings of Metr. Joseph*: DUSHEPOLYEZNOYE CHTENIYE, 1901, 1905, 1906; *address on consecration* (*p.* 11): *Appendix to* TSERKOVNIE VEDOMOSTI. *c.* 1909, *no.* 13-14, *pp.* 601*ff*; *Yuly Daniel* (*Nikolai Arzhak*), ISKUPLENIYE, *Inter-Language Literary Associates, N.Y.*, 1964, *p.* 17.

BORIS TALANTOV

1903 - 1971

ORTHODOX CONFESSOR IN AN ATHEIST SOCIETY

ON JANUARY 4 OF THIS YEAR, in a prison hospital in the city of Kirov (formerly Vyatka), Boris Vladimirovich Talantov died, in his 68th year, of heart disease. In the Soviet system he died in disgrace, as a political criminal, having been in prison since September, 1969, for writing a series of extremely outspoken and detailed accounts of the persecution of the Orthodox faithful by the atheist regime and by the leading hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate—a "crime" known in the Soviet Union as "anti-Soviet activities."

The life of Boris Talantov is a "typical" Christian biography of Soviet times, culminating, in his last years , in an untypical boldness in speaking the truth concerning the religious situation in the USSR. He is an example of the shocking truth of the statement made by the writer Anatoly Kuznetsov, who escaped from the Soviet Union and came to the West in 1968: "It is impossible to be a Soviet citizen and at the same time a 100 per cent decent human being." Boris Talantov was an honest man who kept the Orthodox faith to the end and his Christian conscience clean; and therefore there was simply no place for him in the Soviet system — except prison.

The chief events of his own biography were described by Talantov himself in his "Complaint to the Attorney General of the Soviet Union" of April 26, 1968 (English text in *Religion in Communist Dominated Areas,* August 15|31, 1968). The quotes that follow are from this document, in the words of Talantov himself.

Boris Talantov was born in 1903 in the province of Kostroma, in the family of a priest. In 1922-23 he attended the Mezhov Institute in Moscow. "My close relatives and I suffered greatly from the lawlessness and arbitrary rule of the state security agencies during the Stalin period. My father was condemned by a *troika* (a committee of three secret police officials who sentenced their victims without hearing or appeal) in 1937 at the age of 62, and in spite of his age and illness was placed in the Temnikovskiye camps (Sarov Monastery), where the writer Yu. M. Daniel is now located. On February 5, 1940, I submitted a petition to the attorney general of the RSFSR for his early release from imprisonment on the grounds of illness. After prolonged

red tape, the attorney general's office informed me only on December 19, 1940 that my father had died in the camps on March 12, 1940. The sole reason for his arrest and conviction was that he was a clergyman. My brother Seraphim Vladimirovich Talantov, working as a hydraulic technician in 1930, at the age of 22 in the city of Vologda, was arrested and convicted without any cause. He perished in concentration camps on the White Sea-Baltic Canal. I myself from 1930 to 1941, due to my origin, was continually subjected to threats from the state security agencies. In 1954 I was expelled from the Pedagogical Institute for religious convictions, though the cause was officially entered as invalid status. Working without reproach, as the documents can show, for my whole life each day I expected that I would be arrested without cause —'to rot in prison,' or would be fired from my job with 'blacklisting.' Therefore, I held it my duty to write the newspaper *Pravda* a letter of protest against the tyranny and lawlessness of the state serurity agencies" (pp. 126-7).

This letter, the first of many documents to arouse the ire of Soviet officials against the author, was sent by Talantov anonymously on July 18, 1957. "I do not know whether this letter reached the editor of the newspaper *Pravda,* but ultimately it reached the Kirov KGB (state security-political police, formerly GPU) Headquarters. The latter, by studying the handwriting, established that the author of the letter was me. On July 29, 1958, I was summoned to the KGB Headquarters, where in writing I confirmed my authorship and expressed the regret that due to faint-heartedness I had not signed the letter. On August 14, 1958, I was fired from my job at the Kirov... Polytechnic Institute 'on my own wishes' " (p. 127).

Far from being intimidated by such pressure, Talantov wrote several other letters, now openly under his own name, which he describes as follows:

"I. A letter to the magazine *Science and Religion* containing a refutation of one lie of antireligious propaganda. It was sent on October 31, 1960, and has essentially gone unanswered.

"II. A letter to the newspaper *Izvestiya,* "Mass Destruction of Monuments of Church Architecture in the Kirov Area," sent February 19, 1963. The editor of the newspaper sent me nothing in response to this letter, but a Moscow lecturer in the summer of 1963, evidently on assignment of the editor, at a meeting in the city of Kirov recommended that I be subjected to forced treatment for my seditious letter, that is, placement in a mental hospital.

"III. A letter to the newspaper *Izvestiya,* "The Soviet State and the Christian Religion," received by the newspaper's editor on December 19, 1966" (p. 127).

This last letter was an amplification of an Open Letter to Patriarch Alexy written by Talantov and signed by twelve believers of the Kirov region. "The letter contained mainly a description of unconscionable actions of the local Bishop John aimed at setting church life in disarray. Therefore, the believers requested the Patriarch to remove Bishop John immediately. Among other matters, the letter noted that local civil authorities have, from 1960 to 1964, illegally and forcibly closed 40 churches in the Kirov area (53%), had the icons and iconostases in these churches set afire, plundered the church valuables, and had a number of churches completely destroyed without any necessity for so doing" (p. 123).

" The 'Open Letter of Kirov Believers to Patriarch Alexy' was sent abroad by some method unknown to us and on December 8, 1966, the BBC radio released its content.

"On February 14, 1967, I was summoned to the Kirov Headquarters of the KGB in regard to these letters. At this point it was proposed to me that I officially repudiate my signature on the 'Open Letter of Kirov Believers' which had become well known abroad. In a written explanation I pointed out that, as an author of the 'Open Letter' and of a letter sent to the editor of the newspaper *Izvestiya,* I confirm the genuineness of my signature to the 'Open Letter' and express my readiness to stand firm on the accuracy of what both letters contain... On the very same day a KGB official removed from my apartment my working files consisting of outlines of various philosophical works with my commentary...

"Later, on February 25, I learned from a BBC broadcast that at the same time that I was confirming in the Kirov KGB Headquarters the genuineness of my signature to the 'Open Letter of Kirov Believers,' in London Metropolitan Nikodim had declared this letter to be anonymous and therefore not worthy of any credibility. He made clear his readiness to swear to the truth of his statement on the Cross and the Scriptures... This assertion of Metropolitan Nikodim greatly distressed me, as an Orthodox Christian, since from previous correspondence with the Moscow Patriarchate I was convinced that Metropolitan Nikodim could not be in doubt of the authenticity of the 'Open Letter.' Therefore, on March 22 I sent to Patriarch Alexy a letter in which I refuted the assertion of Metropolitan Nikodim about the anonymity of the 'Open Letter of Kirov Believers' and confirmed the credibility of its contents.

"In addition to myself, the 'Open Letter' was signed by seven more citizens of the city of Kirov. Early in April, they were individually summoned to the Kirov City Council in regard to this matter. Here, inquiries were made by the secretary of the City Council, L. Ostanina, who labelled me 'a danger-

ous individual with foreign connections,' and threatened prison for anyone who signed any further letters of this kind. In spite of the threats, all confirmed that they had signed the 'Open Letter' voluntarily and fully conscious of what they were doing....

"At the same time KGB officials bullied several believers who were petitioning to open a second church in the city of Kirov, accusing them of having ties with me, calling me 'a dangerous political criminal.' Finally, one lecturer at the Polytechnic Institute, where I had worked in 1955-58 as an instructor in higher mathematics, publicly called me 'an enemy of the people,' as was common in the time of Yezhov (Stalin's chief of secret police at the height of the worst 'purges' of the late 1930s)" (pp. 124, 125).

Another result of these letters of Talantov was an article published in the Soviet newspaper *Kirov Pravda* on May 31, 1967, "which contained slanderous assertions, gross threats, and unwarranted insults aimed in my direction," and which contained quotes from the personal archive of Talantov which the KGB had seized on February 14, 1967 — thus showing the close working relation between the Soviet press and the political police in the persecution of believers. The tragic outcome was that "my wife, Nina Agafangelovna Talantova, suffering from hypertension, was unable to bear up under the threats and slanderous charges of the article, consistent in the style of the intimidating articles against the pseudo-enemies of the people of the Yezhov period. On September 7, 1967, as the result of the traumatic experiences, she suffered a heart attack and died on September 16, 1967.

"On the day of her death, I wished to have the rite of unction performed for her, as she desired. But the Dean of the sole remaining open Orthodox church in the city of Kirov, that of St. Seraphim, told me that the local authorities forbade the rite of unction to be performed in homes. This deplorable case demonstrates that believing Christians in the city of Kirov are deprived nowadays even of those rights that they were given by J. V. Stalin" (p. 135). Talantov himself was seriously ill at this time.

In a recent collection of documents detailing the "Persecution of the Russian Orthodox Church Today," *Patriarch and Prophets* (edited by Rev. Michael Bordeaux, Praeger, N. Y., 1970), three other texts by Boris Talantov are given in English translation: "The Calamitous Situation of the Orthodox Church in the Kirov Region and the Role of the Moscow Patriarchate" (Nov. 10, 1966), which is very similar in content to the "Open Letter of Kirov Believers"; and a brief selection from two articles reaching the West in 1968 concerning the betrayal of the Church by the leaders of the Moscow Patriarchate (described further below). Several other articles of his, including one

on "Russian Society, 1965-68," have appeared in the West in Russian in the periodicals *Posev* and the *Messenger* of the Russian Student Christian Movement in Paris.

As a result of all these writings, Boris Talantov was arrested on June 12, 1969, and on September 3 he was sentenced to two years in prison for "anti-Soviet activities." In his final address at his trial, he affirmed the truth of his statements and his faithfulness to his religious convictions and bade farewell to his friends, since he did not expect to return alive from prison. And so it happened.

For the faithful inside of the USSR, Boris Talantov is an inspiring example of Christian courage against overwhelming obstacles. Here is how he is described by the Moscow intellectual Anatoly Krasnov-Levitin, who has himself suffered imprisonment for his outspokenness, in an article "Drama in Vyatka," which was written at the time of Talantov's arrest, and was then smuggled out of the USSR and published in *Posev* (October, 1969).

"I saw him only once in my life: a short little old man with a small gray beard, stooped, with a cheap little case in his hands, untalkative. In appearance, a typical man from the back woods... When all the newspapers and magazines were filled with foul slander against believers, and the hierarchs sat in their places, afraid to utter a word in defense of the Church, — at that time the humble teacher from Vyatka battled for the Church. He battled with the pen, writing striking letters to all fronts; he battled with the word, accusing the arbitrariness of the local authorities and the criminal connivance of the hierarchs. It was difficult for him, an old man. For in the provinces he was completely alone... In the provinces people are more timid than in Moscow, the authorities are more despotic, arbitrariness is more cynical..... But it turned out that in this meek little old man there was an iron will, titanic energy and a great heart. Diseases did not break him, nor difficult personal grief. He is a hero, but a reticent, unobtrusive, quiet hero. He gives his life simply, without affectation, without pose. He speaks the truth in an even, calm voice, and with an even, quiet step proceeds to Golgotha."

Thus Boris Talantov lived and died as a fearless confessor of the holy Orthodox Faith. With his bold protests against the authorities of State and Church and their persecution of Orthodoxy, he stands at the head of those many believers whose heartfelt appeals and protests have reached the free world in the past decade: the believers of Pochaev, the two Moscow priests, Archbishop Ermogen, and others. But in the depth of his analyses he surpasses them all, and indeed adds an entirely new dimension to their protests.

Boris Talantov is a philosophical thinker; indeed, he complains in one letter that his notes and commentaries on various philosophical works have been stolen by the KGB. Applying his philosophical mind to the tragic experiences of himself and his fellow believers under the Communist Yoke, he has penetrated to the very root of the "illness" of the present-day Moscow Patriarchate. The problem is not merely those injustices, persecutions, and lies against which the believers have boldly been protesting for the past decade, but is to be found most fundamentally in the very principles of "*Sergianism*" itself: the "concordat" which Metropolitan Sergius made with the Soviet Government in 1927. Talantov sets forth these views in a special article entitled "*Sergievshchina* (i.e., "the Sergianist affair," with a pejorative connotation), or Adaptation to Atheism (the Leaven of Herod)." (Brief excerpts may be seen in *Patriarch and Prophets,* p. 330, and longer quotations in the excellent and detailed study of John B. Dunlop: "The Recent Activities of the Moscow Patriarchate Abroad and in the USSR," St. Nectarios Educational Series No. 46, Seattle, 1970, pp. 109-116; the quotations that follow are taken from the latter.)

Decisively rejecting the generally favorable view of Metropolitan (Patriarch) Sergius that prevails in the West, Talantov states that "the roots of the serious ecclesiastical crisis which has now been revealed were planted precisely by Patriarch Sergius." The latter's "Declaration" in 1927 was not at all merely "a forced declaration of the Church Administration whose aim was to preserve church parishes"; rather, "this address and the ensuing activity of Metropolitan Sergius were *a betrayal of the Church.*" "Metropolitan Sergius by his adaptation and lies saved no one and nothing, except his own person." Sergianism "not only did not save the Russian Orthodox Church during the period of J. Stalin but, on the contrary, contributed directly to the loss of an authentic freedom of conscience and the transformation of the Church Administration into an obedient instrument of the atheistic regime." Even during World War II, when some churches were reopened, this was not at all a result of the "Sergianist" compromise. "The opening of the churches within narrow limits was not the work of Patriarch Sergius or Patriarch Alexy, but this opening was accomplished by the atheistic regime itself under pressure from the common people and for their appeasement."

In another even more penetrating article, "The Secret Participation of the Moscow Patriarchate in the Struggle of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Against the Orthodox Christian Church" (excerpts in *Patriarch and Prophets,* p. 331; Dunlop, pp. 101-106), Talantov sets forth the purposes for which the Moscow Patriarchate has become "an obedient instrument of

the atheistic regime." At home, "the Moscow Patriarchate and the majority of the bishops are secretly participating in the organized activities of the atheistic regime, directed toward the closing of churches, the limitation of the spreading of faith and the undermining of it in our country." Abroad, "by means of shameless lies and slander" the Patriarchate tries to cover up "the unlawful closing of churches, the oppression of believers and their organizations, and the secret administrative measures directed toward the undermining of faith within the USSR... Secondly, the activity of the Patriarchate is directed toward leading by means of deceit and lies the development of the Christian movement in the whole world along a maximally false path and by this to undermine it." As an example of the latter point he cites the demand of the Moscow delegation at the Rhodes Pan-Orthodox Synod in 1961 that the Orthodox "repudiate Christian apologetics and an ideological struggle with contemporary atheism." In sum, Talantov warns, *"the activity of the Moscow Patriarchate abroad represents a conscious betrayal of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Christian faith. It has stepped forth on the world arena as a secret agent of worldwide anti-Christianity."*

No critic of the Moscow Patriarchate from the Russian Diaspora has come to more drastic conclusions than these. Within the USSR Talantov's words are fully in the tradition of the "Josephite" bishops of 1927, and indeed they demonstrate that the warnings of those bishops over the consequences of Sergius' "Declaration" were entirely justified and have been more than fulfilled. One might, therefore, ask what Talantov's position might be with regard to the "Josephite" or Catacomb Church in the USSR today. He in fact mentions it in one of his writings. "The Slobozhanin couple brought up their children in the Christian faith and in their home promulgated the Christian outlook on life among their fellow villagers. In their home believers, calling themselves members of the True Orthodox Christians, Wanderers, came to worship, sing hymns, and read the Bible. Their only difference from other Orthodox Christians was that they did not recognize Patriarch Alexy and other bishops installed by him, viewing them as traitors to the Church. In June, 1961, the People's Court held M. L. Slobozhanin to be a parasite and exiled him to remote areas for a period of five years... At the end of 1962 the same court deprived Tatyana Slobozhanina of parental rights and exiled her as a parasite to locations outside her district, and the children were forcibly placed in a children's home" ("Complaint to the Attorney General," p. 131). It is clear that Talantov stands together with these persecuted "True Orthodox Christians" against the tyranny of the State and the official Church hierarchy. As John Dunlop has noted (p. 123), on the popular level the

boundary between the "official" and the "catacomb" Church is somewhat fluid. The writings of Boris Talantov testify to the presence of a deep division today within the Moscow Patriarchate between the "Sergianist" hierarchy with its "Communist Christianity" and the truly Orthodox faithful who reject this impious "adaptation to atheism." Those in the West who affirm the possibility of dealing with the Moscow hierarchy because it is "persecuted," without seeing its own persecution of the faithful, stand accused by the writings of Boris Talantov of betraying the true Orthodox Christians of Russia.

God alone knows the future of the Russian Orthodox Church, but we cannot but believe that one day it will again be free. The writings of Boris Talantov point toward that day. Though they were begun with the aim of correcting present-day outrages to Orthodoxy, their final conclusions are so radical and so profound that they totally transcend the immediate conditions that gave them birth. They will doubtless be used as testimony at that longed-for Council of the entire free Russian Church, including the Churches of the Catacombs and of the Diaspora, that will finally judge the situation created by the Communist Yoke and Sergianism.

Boris Talantov was not only a polemicist and philosophical thinker; he was first and foremost simply an Orthodox Christian. A letter written by him in the last month of his life in prison (Dec. 7, 1970) reveals a side of his Christian character that might easily be overlooked in his public writings: his patient suffering, acceptance of God's will, and Christian love. (Russian text in the *Messenger* of the Russian Student Christian Movement, Paris, 1970, No. 4, p. 168.)

"Receiving your letters was a great joy for me, because, having found out on October 2, 1969, about your great misfortune, the whole time I have been worried about you and have fervently prayed to God to deliver you from misfortune.

"I offer you and your friends my heartfelt gratitude for the great kindness which you showed me when I fell into misfortune. Sincere and sacrificial love among us, Christians, is the seal of the fact that we are disciples of Christ. The awareness of this in itself consoles and encourages us, no matter in what condition we may find ourselves. For me, a sick old man, it is of course not easy to live out my confinement. But here I have met several truly believing prisoners, who, being younger than I, have looked after me and helped me as their very father. Likewise, believers in freedom also have comforted me by their letters, in which their sincere Christian love is evident.

"Since November 6 I have been in the hospital because of heart disease. The eye doctor has diagnosed a cataract in both eyes and said that I must

have an operation, or else total blindness will ensue. But all these misfortunes have not broken my spirit and my faith: I can still write and read letters, glory be to God.

"I am in good spirits and with gratitude accept from God all my bitter trials.

"I fervently pray to God for your health and the health of all faithful Christians.

"May the Lord God preserve you from all misfortunes and troubles and grant His perfect joy.

"Your friend, Boris Talantov."

BORIS V. TALANTOV

A New Age of Martyrs and Catacombs

(*Continued from page 3*)

earthly Church—has scarcely existed at all in the heavenly Church of Russia. The time has come to fill its ranks. To the small number of martyrs and passion-bearers who suffered in past centuries there has now been joined an unlimited number of new passion-bearers and martyrs. Among them is the crown-bearing Tsar, the offspring and successor of the baptizer of Russia, with all his family; and one who bore the same name as the baptizer of Russia, the chief hierarch of Russia's baptismal font (Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev); and hierarchs, princes, nobles, warriors, priests, monks, learned and illiterate, city-dwellers and villagers, the renowned, and simple people. Every age, every condition, every corner of Russia have given their new passion-bearers. The whole of Russia has been deluged with the blood of martyrs; the whole of her has been sanctified by it.

O wondrous and glorious army of new sufferers! Who can worthily glorify you? In truth, *blessed is the land that has been drenched with your blood, and holy the dwellings that have received your bodies!* (*Pentecostarion*, Sedalion on Wednesday Matins, Week of Myrrh-bearing Women).

Blessed art thou, O Russian land, being purified by the fire of suffering! Thou didst pass through the water of baptism; thou dost now pass through the fire of suffering; and thou wilt yet enter into thy repose.

(*Continued from page 7*)

A FEW DAYS after the vision and baptism of the Saint, all the servants of his household died, having been stricken with the plague. Then he understood that this calamity was one of those temptations which had been foretold by God, and he gave thanks to Him and also besought his wife not to complain at all on account of this gift from God. Afterwards a disease fell upon the horses and his other animals, all of which died, and the Saint endured this catastrophe also with all calmness. In order to dispel his grief, one day he took his wife and his children and went into the country. But while they were absent, thieves learned that the house was deserted and entered it and took all their possessions. Thus Efstathios and his family were left with only the clothes on their backs. And though formerly they had been most wealthy, after these things they became of all people the poorest and most lamentable.

It happened during those days that the idolators had a great festival, from which neither the emperor nor the commander in chief could be absent. Thus they sought the Saint everywhere, but they could not find him. On this account too they had great sorrow instead of joy, over the terrible misfortune which had befallen the Saint, and also because they did not know where he was to be found, where he had gone, or what had befallen him. After the feast, Theopiste said to her husband, "Why do we remain here in this place any longer, and be the reproach of the whole world? Let us depart; let us go to another place where they do not know us." The Saint asked her where she thought it good for them to go. She answered, "I think a suitable place is Jerusalem, where the Christians say the Sepulchre of Jesus Christ is." The Saint agreed to this and after some days they departed at night-time for Egypt. When they arrived there, they walked and reached a place by the seaside, and finding a ship, they boarded it so that they might pass to the opposite side.

When they had reached the appointed place, the ship's captain asked a much greater fare than was customary, for he had taken a liking to Theopiste, who was very beautiful. Inasmuch as the Saint did not have enough to give him, the ship's captain sought to seize his wife in place of the fare. The Saint would not allow this; therefore the ship's captain commanded the sailors to take hold of him and cast him into the sea. Being found in such straits, the Saint left his wife weeping and lamenting on the ship, and taking his two children he came out on dry land in great grief, not knowing where

to go. Weeping, he said, "Woe unto me and unto you, my children, for a stranger and barbarian has taken your mother."

While walking, he reached a certain river, and as it was very deep, and the children were not able to pass over, he left one on the bank of the river, and took the other to the other side. While he was returning to take the other child also and had reached the middle of the river, he saw that a lion had snatched the one child. Then immediately he turned to see how the other was, and he saw that a wolf had seized him. Thus all those unbearable misfortunes which were about to come upon him were fulfilled one after the other, according to the prophecy of the Lord, and he did not know what to do. "Shall I also fall into the river," he said to himself, "that I may drown, or shall I endure yet, and not commit this most fearful sin?" But the grace and might of God came to his aid that he might not drown himself, but that he might endure all things with patience and nobility, with neither murmuring nor blaspheming.

After these new misfortunes, the Saint came out of that river and sat on a rock and wept most bitterly, saying, "Woe is me! What I was, and to what I have fallen now! Where is the glory? Where are the honors that I had? Where the soldiers? Where the innumerable other men that I had at my command? Yet, O Lord, do not disdain my tears. Do not abandon me unto the end. Thou saidest, O Lord, that I would suffer as many things as Job; but his sufferings were, as I have heard, fewer than mine. For though he lost all his goods, yet he had a small portion of earth and he could rest upon the dung. But I have not where to lay my head. I am a stranger in a strange land. What shall I do? Where shall I flee? What shall become of me? He had friends who comforted him; though he lost his children, yet he had his wife. But as for me, who shall comfort me? Another man has my wife; the beasts have eaten my children. Be not wroth with me, Lord, for these my complaints, but grant me patience and nobility of heart, that I may endure the temptations as Thy faithful follower."

After he had wept considerably, he arose, and having walked away, reached a certain city named Badessos, where he remained and worked for daily wages, sometimes digging the earth, at other times harvesting. When, after one year, he became better acquainted with the people of that place, he besought them and they appointed him as orchard-keeper, and he continued in this occupation for fifteen whole years.

Truly befitting to this Saint is that saying which the divine Chrysostom writes: "None of the sorrows of this present life are able to vex a great and philosophical soul; neither enmities, nor condemnations, nor slanders, nor perils, nor treachery. For like one fleeing to a certain mountain ridge, even

so is a soul inaccessible to all those things that arise from the earth below" (Homily 3, On the Epistle to the Phillippians). And again he says: "For the Christian must differ from the unbeliever even in this, in that he bears all things nobly, and in that, by the hope of future things, he soars above the incursions of human calamities" (On the Statues, Homily 2).

THE ALL-GOOD GOD, however, did not allow His servants to perish. For near that river where the children were seized by the beasts, there were shepherds who, when they saw the lion, all immediately ran with their dogs and were able, with the help of God, to save the one child from the lion's teeth. On the other side, there were farmers who, when they saw the wolf, ran behind him and with their shouts were able to frighten it and make it release the child whole and unharmed. Both the shepherds and those farmers were inhabitants of a nearby city, and since they did not know whose children they were, they themselves took care to rear them and they were reared separately, without their knowing that they were brothers.

As for Theopiste, the wife of the Saint, she was preserved unharmed, for immediately after that barbarous ship-captain had taken hold of her, he became ill (in accordance with Divine dispensation, most assuredly), and a few days after he had reached his country he died without being able to fulfill his shameful desire. Wherefore, she also remained there free. Later, the city in which Theopiste lived rebelled against the Roman rule, and the insurrectionists at that time conquered many cities and fortresses of the Roman Empire.

In doubt as to how to subdue the rebels, Trajan remembered the manly feats of Saint Efstathios, but was unable to learn where he was to be found. The soldiers told him, "Without our commander in chief Placidas, we shall not go to war," and advised him furthermore that he should send men to all the parts of the empire for the purpose of finding him. Whereupon, Trajan accepted their proposition and sent men, two by two, to all the cities and fortresses to seek him out and find him.

Of these groups, two soldiers, former friends of the Saint, one Antiochos by name and the other Akakios, were going about from place to place, when they finally reached the city of Badessos where the Saint was. Seeing them from afar walking on the road, the Saint recognized them by their attire and by the features of their faces, and immediately he wept and besought God that, just as he had seen those two friends of his, though it had been beyond hope, so also might he see his wife Theopiste. "For I know well, Lord," he said, "that the beasts ate my children. Yet deem me worthy to see

them at least in the day of the resurrection." While he was saying these things, he heard a voice saying, "Take courage, Efstathios, for you shall again acquire your former honors and you shall see your wife and your children as well; and in the life to come you shall enjoy every good thing and your name shall be praised unto generations of generations." Hearing these things, the Saint became terrified and fell prostrate.

When those messengers who were walking on the road had drawn near, he recognized them the better. They, however, did not recognize him, because he wore other garments and also because, as a result of his great sorrow, his visage had changed exceedingly. Thus when both had drawn near they said to him, "Hail, friend." The Saint greeted them in return and said to them, "Hail to you also, my brethren." And immediately they asked him if he knew of any stranger in that city, who had a wife and two children. They said, "If you know of such a person and show him to us, we will give you as much money as you ask of us." The Saint asked them why they sought him, and they answered that he was their close friend and they desired to see him, for they had been deprived of his company for a long time. "I do not know of any such man here," said the Saint, "but remain, I beseech you, for a few days in this foreign land so that you may rest, and then go with God. I, too, am a stranger." The messengers of the emperor therefore stayed. As for the Saint, he ran to the city and besought one of his friends to lend him a little money, for friends had come to stay with him and he had nothing with which to offer them hospitality. He promised that when he received his wages, he would repay him. That friend gave the Saint as much money as he asked for, and he went and bought wine and bread and whatever other food he could find at that time. He took them to his hut and set a table for the strangers.

And they ate, being ignorant that he was their general. The Saint, however, as he served them cheerfully and remembered his former state, was unable to hold back his tears but would wipe them when he was apart from his guests, and would return and again care for them. As for the strangers, they looked at the Saint carefully, and after some time, they began to recognize him little by little. Then Antiochus whispered into the ear of Akakios, "Brother Akakios! It seems to me that this man is our general, whom we seek." And Akakios answered him that he also suspected this. "I know well, however," he said, "that Placidas had a scar from a sword-wound on his shoulder. If this man has this scar, it is truly he." Then looking with care they observed the scar truly, and immediately they leapt up and embraced and kissed him and said, "Are you not Placidas, the commander in chief?" Then the Saint was unable to restrain his tears, but answered that

it was not he. But the messengers of the emperor said that no matter how much he denied it, they would not believe him, for they were certain that it was he indeed, and they began to ask him concerning his wife and children, Finally, therefore, the Saint openly confessed that it was he and told them that his wife and children were dead.

While these things were taking place, the event was made known to the city also, and many people ran to learn what those officers sought, and they marvelled, saying, "How great was this man and to what a state he has fallen here in our land!" But the messengers presented the imperial decree to him and dressed him in the soldier's uniform of his rank, and then they departed with him for Rome. The inhabitants of the city accompanied him until Saint Efstathios ordered them not to come any further, but to return to their homes. On the way, the Saint narrated to the messengers all the things that had befallen him — that is, the appearance of Jesus Christ, how he was named Efstathios at Holy Baptism, how his wife was seized by the ship owner and likewise his children by the beasts, and, in general, all his misfortunes.

WITHIN FIFTEEN DAYS they reached Rome. When Trajan heard this, he came out to welcome him and embraced him and asked him why he had departed from Rome. And the Saint narrated everything to him also, openly in the presence of all the people, concerning all that had befallen him. Then there was great joy in the whole encampment over the finding and return of the Saint, and the emperor besought him to gird himself again with the belt of commander in chief.

When this was done, the Saint made a count of the existing troops and found them to be fewer than he needed. For this reason, by imperial decree he enlisted as many as he still needed from all over the empire. The decree also reached the city where the Saint's children were, and the authorities there entered their names for enlistment, since they were foreigners and were unenlisted. Both the youths were most handsome and tall, and even from their physical traits they looked as though they were descended from an aristocratic family.

After all the newly-enlisted had been gathered and divided into troops, companies, and battalions, the Saint commanded those two youths to serve him at table, since he saw that they were exceedingly handsome and prudent and imposing.

The military expedition was successful, for St. Efstathios retook all the cities and fortresses that had come under the sway of the rebels, whom he fought and vanquished. Afterwards, having advanced and passed the river

Chryspis, he conquered and plundered the enemy's land. Finally he reached the city where Theopiste was. Not knowing this, he stopped to remain and rest at the very house where she was staying, and he pitched his tent in the courtyard, since it was large and belonged to the most wealthy shipowner of that city. There his troops spent three days in rest.

ON ONE OF THESE DAYS, the sons of the Saint took some victuals for cooking to the house where Theopiste was staying. While they were sitting outside the house waiting for the meal to be prepared, they began conversing. The younger, who was first to speak, said, "We both have been found in the same service of the general for so long, and never have we asked one another concerning our families." "I, too," answered the elder, "have desired this for a considerable time; yet what has not come to pass until this day, let it come to pass now. As I was young, I do not remember anything else but that my father was a general from Rome, and that my mother was very beautiful, and that I also had a handsome brother, younger than myself, with hair like yours. Our father and mother took us one day and departed from Rome, but where they were about to journey, I do not know. I remember only that we were walking near a coast and afterwards all boarded a ship, and that later our mother, for what reason I do not know, stayed on board and only our father came out on the dry land with us; and after having walked we reached a very great river. Since we were small, we were unable to cross it, but our father took my younger brother on his shoulders and carried him across to the far side and left me on the near side. And while he was returning to take me also, a wolf seized my brother, and on my side a lion seized me. But God had pity on me, and it happened at that time that shepherds were there in the forest, and they rescued me from the teeth of the lion and took me to the city which you also know, and it was there that they reared me and I grew up. But I do not know what became of my father and younger brother."

When the younger brother heard these things, he leapt up immediately with joy and said, "By the might of Christ, we are brothers! From all that you have told me, I am assured of it. They that reared me told me that they rescued me from the mouth of a wolf." Then the younger arose also and they embraced one another with great joy and gladness. Having overheard the whole conversation of the youths from within, Theopiste understood that she was their mother. When she saw them embracing one another, she wanted to reveal who she was, but they were in a hurry, and taking the vessels with the food, they ran to prepare the table for the commander in chief.

The next day, Theopiste went to the tent of the commander in chief in order to find her sons, but she did not find them, for they were absent on another duty. She found, however, the Saint sitting alone under the shade of a tree. Seeing him from afar, immediately she felt great turmoil within her heart, because it seemed to her that he was her husband. Wishing to speak to him, she drew near and said to him, "My lord, I pray, hearken to my words. I am from Rome, and they have brought me here as a prisoner. I beg you, therefore, to take me back."

While Theopiste was saying these things to the Saint, she looked at his face carefully, and she found that he resembled her husband greatly, but she did not dare to ask him who he was. Finally, however, when she was convinced without a doubt that it was he, she fell at his feet and said to him, "I beg you, my lord, do not be angry with me, but hear my words. Will you not do me the favor, I pray, of telling me what was your former state; for I think that you are Placidas, the commander in chief, who believed in Christ the true God, after you had seen him crucified between the antlers of the deer, and who afterwards endured many temptations, and in the end took his wife, that is, myself, and his sons, Agapios and Theopistos, who were yet little, and set out to go to Jerusalem. But the ship's captain, an ill-mannered man, kept me as surety and brought me here to this city where you see me. I have our Lord Jesus Christ and His angels as witnesses that I have remained pure and undefiled until now; neither by him, nor by any other man, have I suffered harm to my honor."

When the Saint heard these things, he was assured both by her facial characteristics and by the exact information which she gave him, that she was truly his wife. Immediately he cried out with a great voice, weeping, "Glory to Thee, my God, glory to Thee." Then they both arose and embraced one another and glorified God. Theopiste asked him where their children were. The Saint answered that the beasts had eaten them. "And how did this come to pass?" Theopiste asked him once more. Then he narrated in detail what had happened. "Let us glorify God," she said to him. "Our children live till this day and are here with you; for yesterday I heard them narrating exactly these very things which you now told me. And if you do not believe it, order them to come so that you yourself may hear their words." Immediately, therefore, the Saint called the youths and said, "Young men! Tell me of your lineage." Then the elder narrated as many things as he remembered and knew, and from these things both the Saint and his wife were assured that truly these were their children.

What joy and gladness there was that day, both for the Saint and for his whole army! Seven whole days did that joy and celebration of the army

last, not only because they had conquered and subdued the rebels, but chiefly because the beloved spouse and children of the commander in chief had been found. As for the Saint, he glorified God with his whole heart and soul, saying, "I thank Thee, O Lord my God, that Thou didst not abandon me Thy humble slave to suffer temptation continuously, but Thou gavest me rest from my great tribulations. I glorify Thee, my God, that even as Thou didst foretell me, so also hast Thou brought it to pass. Now that I have seen my wife and my children, receive Thou my soul."

WHEN SAINT EFSTATHIOS had subdued the rebellion totally, he returned to Rome. During the time of the Saint's absence the Emperor Trajan died, and Hadrian, his nephew (who afterwards founded Adrianopolis), succeded him. He, too, was an idolator and a great persecutor of the Christians When he learned that Saint Efstathios, the victor and conqueror of the rebels, was coming to Rome, he went out to meet him, in accordance with the custom of the emperors of Rome at that time. When he learned that the Saint had found his wife and children, he wished to offer a great sacrifice to the idols, first because the rebels had been defeated, and secondly because Saint Efstathios had received back alive and well his most beloved ones whom he had lost a considerable time before. Though Hadrian had gone to the Temple of Apollo and was offering sacrifice, the Saint did not wish to go and do the same. When Hadrian asked him afterwards why he too had not gone to the Temple of Apollo to offer sacrifice to the gods, by whose might he had both conquered the enemy and found his wife and children, the Saint answered, "O king, I offer sacrifice to my Christ; Him do I glorify and Him do I thank, for I owe my life and my soul to Him. It was He that gave me the power to conquer the enemies of the emperor, and it was by His good will that I saw both my wife and my children again. I do not know nor believe in any other god but Him alone Who created the heaven and the earth and all that is therein."

Then Hadrian ordered him to take off his military belt immediately, and commanded that he, his wife, and his children stand before him as ones condemned. In this manner, he began to put various questions and remarks to him, attempting to convince them to change their minds. But because he did not achieve this, though he employed every means, he ordered that they be taken to a certain plain and there a large, hungry lion be loosed on them. But when the lion had drawn near, running rapidly toward them, it bowed its head as though it were worshipping them and then turned back. However, when the emperor's purpose had thus come to nothing, he commanded the soldiers to heat up well an instrument of torture which was of brass, and

which was made in the shape of a bull, and to enclose the Saints within it. When an innumerable multitude of secret Christians and idolators learned of this, on the day which had been appointed for the aforesaid death sentence, they went to see how they would enclose the Saints and burn them in that brazen bull.

When, therefore, they had lit a great blaze below the brass bull and it had been heated to a considerable degree, the soldiers prepared to cast them within. The Saints, however, besought them to allow them to remain a little so that they might pray first. When they had received permission, they lifted up their hands and prayed to God, saying, "Lord Jesus Christ, the God of hosts, Whom no one hath seen and Whom we were deemed worthy to behold, hearken unto our supplication now, since Thou hast been well pleased that we should be united together; even as Thou didst preserve the bodies of the Holy Three Youths from the fiery furnace, in like manner preserve Thou our bodies also, and be Thou well pleased that they be buried together in one sepulchre, and receive Thou our souls. Grant, O Lord, Thy grace to our relics and let him that calleth upon us have a portion in the kingdom of the heavens; and though he call upon us on river or on sea, when he is in peril, we beseech Thee that Thou come unto his aid." Then the Saints heard a voice coming from heaven and saying, "Whatsoever ye ask, this and even more shall be granted, because for the sake of My name ye endured great temptations with singular patience and nobility. For your sufferings in this temporal life, ye shall enjoy the everlasting joy in the heavenly fatherland and the unfading crowns that befit your struggles." Then with exceeding joy the Saints surrendered themselves to the soldiers most eagerly, and were enclosed within that brass bull, and in a short while surrendered their holy souls unto the Lord in the one hundred and twenty-sixth year of Grace.

After three days, Hadrian commanded that the brass bull be opened. When they opened it and saw that not even a hair of the Saints was harmed from the fire, the emperor thought that they were still alive, and ordered that they be brought out. When the people there saw their bodies whole and unharmed, they all began to cry out with a great voice, with one mouth and one heart, "Great is the God of the Christians! He alone is the true God and none other." Fearing for himself, Hadrian departed from there.

Thus, during that tumult certain Christians took the relics of the Saints secretly and buried them in an appropriate place. During the reign of the great Constantine, the protector of Christians, the Christians built a temple for the Saints, and every year they celebrated, as they celebrate even to this day, the memorial of the Saints on the twentieth day of the month of September, to the glory of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.